

SENATE, No. 3462

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 7, 2019

Sponsored by:

Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “New Jersey Affordable Housing Internet Portal Study Commission.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing a commission to study the creation of an
2 affordable housing Internet portal.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. There is established in, but not of, the Department of
8 Community Affairs, an advisory commission to be known as the
9 “New Jersey Affordable Housing Internet Portal Study
10 Commission.” The commission shall consist of 11 members as
11 follows:

12 (1) two members of the Senate, one appointed by the Senate
13 President, and one appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; and
14 two members of the General Assembly, one appointed by the
15 Speaker of the general Assembly, and one appointed by the
16 Assembly Minority Leader;

17 (2) the Commissioner of Community Affairs, the Executive
18 Director of the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the
19 Executive Director of the Council on Affordable Housing, and the
20 Chief Technology Officer, or their designees, who shall serve ex-
21 officio; and

22 (3) three public members, who shall be appointed by the
23 Governor no later than the 30th day after the effective date of this
24 act, as follows: one person upon the recommendation of the New
25 Jersey League of Municipalities, one person upon the
26 recommendation of the New Jersey Association of Counties, and
27 one person upon the recommendation of a non-profit affordable
28 housing advocacy group.

29 b. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable after
30 the appointment of its members. Vacancies in the membership of
31 the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original
32 appointments were made.

33 c. Members of the commission shall serve without
34 compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses
35 incurred in the performance of their duties within the limits of funds
36 made available to the commission for its purposes.

37 d. The Commissioner of Community Affairs, or the
38 Commissioner’s designee, shall serve as chairperson of the
39 commission. The commission shall select a vice-chairperson from
40 among the members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who
41 need not be a member of the commission.

42 e. The commission shall examine the feasibility of creating an
43 affordable housing Internet portal that includes the following:

44 (1) complete, up-to-date accounting of available affordable
45 housing, including publicly supported housing, privately supported
46 housing, and housing supported by non-profit organizations and
47 religious groups;

- 1 (2) an affordable housing checklist, including links to
2 information deemed necessary by the commission;
- 3 (3) a streamlined process by which individuals may apply for
4 subsidized housing with the ability to:
- 5 (a) complete the application on a smartphone;
- 6 (b) compile all of the paperwork required for submission by an
7 applicant by municipal, county, and State housing agencies, agents,
8 and authorities, as customized by pre-selected user preferences;
- 9 (c) track the process of an application and provide digital
10 updates through email and text messaging to applicants; and
- 11 (d) complete a financial and housing literacy educational
12 module;
- 13 (4) the creation of an automated “chatbot” which can answer
14 frequently asked questions in real-time, and direct those seeking
15 affordable housing to a hotline for additional information when
16 necessary;
- 17 (5) the creation of a feedback portal which shall be monitored to
18 consider potential improvements for the Internet website on a
19 regular basis; and
- 20 (6) information available for municipalities on zoning best
21 practices, including ways to integrate affordable housing into the
22 existing municipal infrastructure.
- 23 f. The commission shall hold not less than three public
24 hearings, with no less than one public hearing each in the northern,
25 central, and southern regions of the State.
- 26
- 27 2. The commission may issue any interim reports it deems
28 appropriate and shall submit a final report of its findings and
29 recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant
30 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than nine
31 months after the date of the commission organization meeting.
- 32
- 33 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
34 the issuance of the final commission report.
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- 36

37 STATEMENT

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39 This bill would establish the “New Jersey Affordable Housing
40 Internet Portal Study Commission.” The purpose of the commission
41 will be to examine the feasibility of creating an affordable housing
42 Internet portal. The commission will include the following 11
43 members: two members of the Senate, one appointed by the Senate
44 President, and one appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; and
45 two members of the General Assembly, one appointed by the
46 Speaker of the General Assembly, and one appointed by the
47 Assembly Minority Leader; the Commissioner of Community
48 Affairs, the Executive Director of the Housing and Mortgage

1 Finance Agency, the Executive Director of the Council on
2 Affordable Housing, and the Chief Technology Officer, or their
3 designees, who shall serve ex-officio; and three public members,
4 who shall be appointed by the Governor no later than the 30th day
5 after the effective date of this act, as follows: one person upon the
6 recommendation of the New Jersey League of Municipalities, one
7 person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Association of
8 Counties, and one person upon the recommendation of a non-profit
9 affordable housing advocacy group.

10 Under the bill, the commission will examine the feasibility of
11 creating an affordable housing Internet portal which would include
12 complete, up-to-date accounting of available affordable housing,
13 including publicly supported housing, privately supported housing,
14 and housing supported by non-profit organizations and religious
15 groups. The portal will also include an affordable housing checklist,
16 including links to information deemed necessary by the study
17 commission and a streamlined application process by which
18 individuals may apply for subsidized housing. Finally, the portal
19 will include: the creation of an automated “chatbot” which can
20 answer frequently asked questions in real-time and direct those
21 seeking affordable housing to a hotline for additional information
22 when necessary; the creation of a feedback portal which will be
23 monitored to consider potential improvements for the internet
24 website on a regular basis; and information available for
25 municipalities on zoning best practices, including ways to integrate
26 affordable housing into the existing municipal infrastructure.

27 The commission will conduct at least three public hearings, with
28 one each to be located in the northern, central, and southern regions
29 of the State. The commission may issue any interim reports it
30 deems necessary, and will issue a final report of its findings and
31 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.